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Military

Ex-president lauds veterans from 1941

By Sig Christenson

Express-News Military Writer

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FREDERICKSBURG — Former President George Bush told Pearl Harbor survivors and other World War II veterans Friday they'll serve as a source of inspiration for a new generation of Americans facing the scourge of terrorism.

"In America, we don't have kings or royalty, but in my view, that does not mean we lack nobility," Bush said. "Quite the contrary. Today we see a new band of heroes stepping forward to follow in the long line of Americans who answered the call of duty, fought for freedom and served their fellow man with honor and dignity."

Bush spoke to a crowd of 5,000 gathered here for the 60th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. During the ceremony, there was no escaping the similarities between the Sept. 11 terror strikes and 1941 attack on the Navy base in Hawaii.

Both attacks came out of the blue. Both saw horrific casualties. Both awakened an easily distracted nation, sparking a deep anger among Americans and a fierce determination to crush the enemy.

Standing in the shadow of the mainmast of the destroyer USS Foote outside the National Museum of the Pacific War, Bush tackled the parallels of the two days that stand among the grimmest on America's 2-century-old calendar.

In discussing them, he charted an upbeat course for the crowd, which included retired Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager, a World War II ace who made history by breaking the sound barrier in a rocket plane in 1947.

Bush said his son and other U.S. leaders are "being tested by the forces of tyranny," just as President Franklin D. Roosevelt was challenged by Japan and Germany after Pearl Harbor.

But Americans, he predicted, are poised to pass this latest test.



Pearl Harbor veterans (from left) Ken Swedburg of Alamo; Wilbur Wright of Fairfax, Mo.; and Thomas J. Powell of West Point salute during the national anthem at the 60th anniversary ceremony of the Pearl Harbor attack at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg on Friday. Photo by Kin Man Hui/Express-News

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of the 20th century gives this country the same steadiness of purpose (and) the same resolution to meet this, the first great challenge of the 21st century," he said of World War II veterans living and dead.

"And today your selfless example of service offers our nation a deep, abiding reservoir of confidence from which we can draw forth the necessary will to once again turn back the tide of tyranny that crashed upon America's shores."

Before Bush sat 300 Pearl Harbor veterans, along with their wives and children. More than a few wore Hawaiian shirts, carried cameras and tapped their feet as the Air Force Band of the West from Lackland AFB performed.

A standing-room-only crowd behind those seats stretched from end to end of the street in front of the museum and the gallery named in honor of Bush, a naval aviator who bailed out of his crippled plane in September 1944 after a bombing run on the Japanese island of Chichi Jima.

The crowd watched four F-16 jets with their landing gear down fly slowly over the museum. The fighters later passed by a second time, one plane breaking away from the rest in a "missing man" formation traditionally flown on Pearl Harbor day.

Pearl Harbor was in ruins after the second wave of Japanese planes flew back to their carriers in 1941. In all, 19 ships were sunk or damaged, 2,408 Americans were killed and an additional 1,178 were wounded.

Japan lost 29 aircraft and five midget submarines and 64 were killed.

"Today we stand in the company of heroes — men and women who know that freedom is not free, but requires a great cost," said Gov. Rick Perry. "America is free because you are brave. America's strong because of that day 60 years ago; you answered the call of duty."

Perry said terrorists picked a fight "with the wrong nation and the wrong leader."

The elder Bush told the crowd in his closing remarks that "our president has the courage to see this new crisis through just as Roosevelt did 60 years ago."

That message resonated with many veterans in the audience.

"I've got a real good feeling toward our president today, that he's going to stick with it," said USS Helena veteran Howard Luckham, 83, of Springfield, Ore.

Yeager, 78, and other veterans insisted after the ceremony that they aren't heroes.

"You had a job to do, you do it and don't ask questions," said 77-year-old

<http://news.mysanantonio.com/story.cfm?xla=saen&xlb=340&xlc=544227&xld=180>

The ground-floor opportunity to take on the menacing Axis powers was, for Al DuBois, a matter of timing.

"Most of us, we never went around telling people we were Pearl Harbor survivors," said the 80-year-old DuBois, a retired oil company manager from Ocala, Fla., who served on the battleship USS Pennsylvania.

"Pennsy" received only minor damage in the attack.

"I mean, we had a job to do so we did it. I think we lived our life, and I'm hoping that the other generation coming up now will do the same thing."

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12/08/2001

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Nation thanking troops via Net

By Emanuel Gonzales

San Antonio Express-News

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Thousands of miles of ocean separate Americans from troops serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Marlin Campion, a Vietnam veteran, reached out to them the best way he knew how — through the Internet.

"Come home safe," were the words that stood out in his brief message taken by "Give Thanks America," a traveling video studio that set up shop Saturday in front of the Alamo. Campion's message will be seen by troops serving abroad.

Americans are turning to "safe mail" by utilizing the Internet to support American military personnel this Christmas season.

Concerns over mail safety recently prompted the Pentagon to suspend random letter-writing campaigns. The suspension includes Operation Dear Abby, which for more than 17 years has allowed American citizens to send letters to unknown service members during the holidays.

People who want to send letters or cards to family members serving abroad can still send conventional mail, as long as they send it in addressed envelopes. The Postal Service recommends mailing letters by Tuesday for delivery by Christmas. The deadline for parcels has passed.

But there are several outlets available to those wishing to send messages to any and all troops.

The military has launched a Web site, <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil>, that posts messages from people all over the country to troops overseas. Participants, who give their name and hometown, may even include their e-mail address if they would like a response.

Members of Congress have been encouraging well-wishers to send correspondence through Web sites. The service is free and open to anyone.

"I'm sure it's a great comfort to our military men and women that, here at home, we are thinking of them and praying for their safe return," U.S. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez said.

Claire Wilson of San Antonio is among hundreds of Americans who have posted messages on the military Web site.

"I think it's good for the people who get to send a message to someone in the military because it makes us feel like we're doing something to help," she said.

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Crystal Coleman.

well received. "Thank you for making the world a better and safer place for us," she wrote. "Anytime you come to San Antonio, be sure to look up this grandma. A home cooked Mexican dinner will be waiting."

Some corporations are sponsoring events to boost patriotism. Circuit City has teamed up with networks like CBS, UPN and MTV to record and broadcast messages that also will be seen on armed forces channels. And people with a military ID can record a free five-minute message on DVD and mail it to a service member.

The mobile "Give Thanks America" video studio, co-sponsored by Compaq Computer Corp., will be touring the Southwest for the next two weeks. Compaq will send the streaming video messages through e-mail to service personnel or post them for New York police and firefighters to see on its Web site, www.givethanksamerica.com.

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12/09/2001

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Luke land-use study funding on brink of extinction

By CAROLYN DRYER

Last spring, legislators were coming together in an effort to ensure Luke Air Force Base stayed open and remained a viable economic force in the Valley. Senate Bill 1120 appropriated \$2 million in fiscal year 2003-2004 for agriculture preservation districts throughout Arizona. In that

same bill, \$1 million was set aside for land-use planning around military bases.

This week, several West Valley legislators were scrambling for votes just to save a \$.5 million allocation for the land-use study. The House and Senate have bills in the mill that would remove all of the funds from the budget. SB 1010 passed

27-2 and HB 2018 passed in the appropriations committee 9-6 last week.

Steve Jewett, special assistant to Gov. Jane Dee Hull, said the governor's revised budget removes the \$2 million for agriculture preservation districts but leaves at least \$.5 million in the 2002-2003 budget for land-use planning.

Jewett said, "We need the plan. Landowners know we need the plan. Nobody is concerned about the \$2 million. But the \$1 million for the study is needed for Luke to come up with compatible future construction."

Different jurisdictions have different needs, Jewett said, citing Buckeye and Goodyear officials who say the flight path of Luke might be a good area for an industrial park. Surprise may want retail to serve homes on the outside of the flight path, Jewett said.

What is needed is a plan sensitive to urban growth and the Luke mission, Jewett said. Second,



Photo by Carolyn Dryer

Steve Jewett, special assistant to Gov. Jane Dee Hull, said timing is critical to get funding for a land-use study around Luke Air Force Base.

Luke... cont'd

Jewett added, is a plan to determine the value of the land. Third, funding is needed to solve the problem "once and for all," Jewett said.

"I believe the Air Force is very interested in partnering with us," Jewett said. "They want to know how much land is affected and what is the value."

Companies have already submitted bids to the state procurement office and the department of commerce to conduct a land-use study, Jewett said.

"It's tragic to have come this far and for lack of vision, let this fall short," Jewett said. "We shouldn't stop five yards short of the goal line."

Rep. Mike Gleason (R-Dist. 15) of Sun City West, said he felt the land-use study was "not that valuable in the first place. We're in a tight situation. We can't afford to waste half a million bucks. There are other places to use a half million."

Gleason said nobody has been willing to put up the

money to lease the development rights from property owners around Luke and that a study to evaluate how much development rights around the base are worth would change.

"If we lose the base, we lose the base," Gleason said. "We needed \$10 million a year to lease the rights."

Gleason said no matter how many studies are done, the final decision would rest with the property owners.

House Majority Whip Rep. Robert Blendu (R-Dist. 15) of Litchfield Park, was one of the dissenting votes in the House Appropriations Committee 9-6 vote to eliminate the land-use study funding.

Blendu said, "I think you're going to see some changes there."

Amendments to HB 2018 were expected to be tagged on this week that would add the \$.5 million back in.

"Mike (Gleason) and I differ," Blendu said. "(U.S. Rep. Bob Stump's assistant) Lisa Adkins and I both agree this money is impor-



**Rep. Robert Blendu
House Majority Whip**

tant to get other things done. All we need at this point is \$.5 million."

Although Gleason reasoned that a study done this year would not be valuable in three or four years, Blendu countered that studies like this are needed when the Base Relocation and Closure Committee begins its evaluations of military bases.

In Blendu's opinion, the final answer to base closures are land swaps. Blendu said he plans to introduce a land-swap bill in the next legislative session. But that plan requires a vote of the people, Blendu

said, because the state constitution prohibits swapping state land for private land. With his bill, Blendu said, farmers still farm the land through leases from the state and they can sell their swapped land for a profit. Open space is the result whether Luke leaves or stays.

Sen. Brenda Burns (R-Dist. 17, Glendale) called the elimination of the \$.5 million "very short-sighted."

"If the doors close on Luke, hindsight isn't going to help," Burns said.

Jewett said, "Timing is critical so we can get it into the federal budget next year."

At least one West Valley legislator is paying attention to the Luke funding situation.

Tuesday afternoon, Blendu said, "I'm working on it. It's my feeling that when we resolve the House budget with the Governor's proposal, that money will be included and the final bill will include that money in it."

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Luke cont'd

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